



Montgomery County Council

For Immediate Release

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STUDY SHOWS NO NEGATIVE IMPACT ON RESTAURANT REVENUE, EMPLOYMENT FOR COUNTY RESTAURANTS SINCE OCTOBER 2003 SMOKING BAN

A scientific study released today on the economic effects of the smoking ban in Montgomery County eating and drinking establishments since the region's first smoking ban went into effect in October 2003 showed no negative impact on restaurant revenues and employment.

The study, presented to the County today, compared restaurant tax data and employment figures from Montgomery County with figures from Fairfax County, Virginia, from Baltimore city, and from Frederick, Howard, Prince George's, and Baltimore counties in Maryland. It also broke down the data by different types of restaurants: full service restaurants with liquor licenses, limited service (mostly fast food) restaurants, and all restaurants combined.

The study was carried out by Dr. William Evans of the Department of Economics and the Maryland Population Research Center at the University of Maryland and by Dr. Andrew Hyland of the Department of Health Behavior at Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo, New York.

The study showed that restaurant revenue in Montgomery County and in the comparison counties increased nearly the same amount. The study also showed that employment in Montgomery County establishments actually increased faster than the growth in the other counties following the smoking ban.

In the 12 months following the ban, restaurant employment in Montgomery County grew by 8 percent, compared with a 6.68 percent increase in Fairfax County.

"This law was advanced to protect the health of restaurant workers and customers from the known hazardous effects of second-hand smoke," said Councilmember Phil Andrews, who championed the law. "The air is now safe in all County restaurants – and folks appreciate that. When this measure was first proposed, the opponents made broad claims about how it would harm the County's restaurant industry.

"The facts show otherwise. That's why similar measures pending in Prince George's County and the District of Columbia ought to – and I believe will be – approved. The gloom-and-doom predictions of the restaurant industry just don't stand up to scrutiny."

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